

Anthony Butler to Andrew Jackson, September 26, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

COLONEL ANTHONY BUTLER TO JACKSON.¹

¹ On the points brought out here by Butler regarding his whole career in Mexico see Professor E. C. Barker's excellent article, "Jackson and the Texas Revolution", *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XII. 788–809. The letter of Sept. 26 is discussed on p. 794.

Mexico City, September 26, 1833.

Dear Sir, I am very sorry to be compelled to say, that our prospects of effecting an amicable arrangement with the present Administration of the Mexican Government upon the subject of boundary is closed, and that should the present incumbents continue in office (of which there are great doubts) no other mode is left us but to occupy that part of the Territory lying west of the Sabine and East of the Naches² (so called by the Mexicans) and to Garrison Nacogdoches by the Troops from Cantonment Jessup. there are present no Mexican Troops in that Section of Country, they having abandoned the whole province of Texas East of the Guadalupe during the last fall after the Capture of Port Velasco and Anahuac by the Inhabitants of Texas themselves. Such a proceeding would be justifiable as I conceive in every aspect of the question, and would lead no doubt, to an immediate arrangement and adjustment of that question, and secure to us a boundary as far West as the desert, a boundary that Nature herself seems to have indicated as the true one between the two Nations. I say it would secure this, because I have ascertained in the most positive and satisfactory manner that the people of T. will resist any partition of the Country, they will insist in the most decisive manner to remain united and all belong to the U.S. or to Mexico; and as there is no difficulty in comprehending the meaning of

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their threat against division of the Territory, for they are confident of our insisting on the Naches as the Boundary, it will have the effect of obtaining for us a relinquishment of the whole Country for a fair equivalent and afford the Mex'n Government the excuse of being compelled to make the Cession by the act of their own people.

2 Neches. Cantonment Jesup (now Fort Jesup, Sabine parish, La.) was halfway (20 m.) from Natchitoches to the Sabine.

I have said that the occupancy of the Country by placing a Garrison at Nacogdoches would be justifiable, and I do so, because we have at least as strong grounds for insisting on the Naches as the true boundary as the Mexicans have for claiming to establish the line at what they call the Sabine, as a reference to the enclosed topographical sketch I think will prove; and if our pretensions are apparently as clear and as strong as theirs we have equal right to occupancy in the disputed Territory, Nacogdoches being about midway between the Sabine and the Naches. The Mexicans have held possession hitherto, and we have tacitly assented as I presume; first because it was not so well understood then as now that a conflicting claim existed, and secondly, finding the adversary in possession at the period of discovering the true condition of the question, they were permitted to remain, in the expectation that an amicable arrangement would be entered into. As for the present that expectation may be considered as overthrown, and as the possession of Nacogdoches has been relinquished by the Military all having long since retired, I cannot imagine a sound reason against our doing ourselves right, and the more especially as every movement, and all the Conduct pursued on the part of this Adm'n indicate a hostile temper towards us.

You may suppose it a strange idea of mine, but I can assure you that in the Arrogance and folly of this people, they believe that we fear them, and that they may take any liberties with, or make any exactions upon us without hazard of resistance, and I assert as a fact, that an Officer of Rank in their Army said not long since, that if the Government would

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give him 10,000 Men he would march to the Capital of the U. States and capture it as the British had done.

As to the Hostility of which I have spoken, or at least a total disregard of all our rights, my recent despatches to the Department of State will furnish abundant proof. The Case of Baldwin, the Case of the Ship *Robert Wilson* , of that of the Vessel seized and Sold at Tampico, the Maltreatment of our Citizens, and the utter neglect to reply even to my remonstrances requires on our part as I believe a total change in our policy towards this Government: In fine we have suffered more wrong from the present party in power during the seven Months of their Administering the Government, than we did during the whole period of Gen. Bustamente's; Under the Administration of the latter, there were liberal well informed men at the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Treasury, whose influence regulated and gave tone to the Measures of the Cabinet; and without setting forth any boastful pretensions to liberality and justice as the present Men in power do, they proved by their acts, that Liberality and Justice were the Landmarks they steered by.

Upon the several matters referred to in Despatches No. 53 and 54, I request and shall hope for immediate instructions. I did not write you by either, being much pressed for time, in consequence of the continual correspondence kept up with the Mexican government at that period.

I hope that before this arrives you will be in possession of my Communications alluded to above, and have settled on the Course of Action to be pursued.

I remain Dear Sir very Respectfully